

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 9 are independent and stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over JP '630, JP '161, or JP '442 in view of JP '547. This rejection is respectfully traversed because JP '547 is not prior art to the present application. The publication date of JP '547, relied on by the Examiner for allegedly teaching "bent portions," is June 14, 2002. In the Interview Summary dated July 7, 2005, the Examiner alleges that the foreign priority document JP 2001-321673 does not support the "bent portion" limitation. This allegation is respectfully traversed for the following reasons. The Examiner is directed to paragraph [0011] of JP 2001-321673, which discloses that the "unapplied protruded portion of the electrode group 6 obtained in the step of Fig. 1 was bent to be flat" (emphasis added). Accordingly, although not expressly shown, it is respectfully submitted that the aforementioned written description of JP 2001-321673 supports the claimed bent portion.

Nonetheless, to further support the claimed bent portion, Applicants have attached hereto a certified English translation of the foreign priority document JP 2001-368291 (with an effective date of December 3, 2001). Support for the "bent portion" limitation can be found, for example, in Figure 1 of JP 2001-368291 which expressly shows one exemplary embodiment of the bent portion. Further, paragraphs [0017] and [0025-0026] identify the exemplary bent portions 11, 12 as being formed from bending the projected portions of the electrode plate group 10 (similar to aforementioned disclosure in paragraph [0011] of JP 2001-321673) and the connections to the respective current collecting plate.

Accordingly, as JP '547 was published after the effective filing date of the present application, it is not prior art to the present application.

Based on the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all pending claims are patentable over the cited prior art. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103 be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Having fully responded to all matters raised in the Office Action, Applicants submit that all claims are in condition for allowance, an indication for which is respectfully solicited. If there are any outstanding issues that might be resolved by an interview or an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is requested to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number shown below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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